

## WHISTLER TENNIS ASSOCIATION NEEDS YOUR HELP

(original email from Uros Budimac (member of the WTA Board of Directors) [uros@budimactennis.com](mailto:uros@budimactennis.com))

Dear Tennis Players,

The Whistler Tennis Association (WTA) <http://whistlertennisassociation.ca/membership/> is reaching out to tennis players for help and support on an ongoing project to build a new tennis facility in Whistler.

The WTA is an advocacy group that was established with the mission "to keep a viable indoor/outdoor tennis facility in Whistler and grow year-round tennis for our community and guests."

Tennis has a long history in Whistler, dating back over one hundred years, but the existing Whistler Racket Club <https://www.mywrc.ca/> (WRC) on the Northlands Boulevard site was opened in 1994. For those who have never visited it, the WRC has three indoor courts and seven outdoor courts, three of which have deteriorated beyond use and now sit idle. Despite recent efforts of a revival, the whole facility is, in fact, in very rough shape. There is a long story behind all of this, but the bottom line is that the existing club was never designed to last as long as it did.

The original vision of the local government, dating back to the late 1980s, was for the resort to have a "world class" tennis facility in Whistler, complete with four indoor courts, twelve outdoor courts, a stadium court, and the capacity to host televised professional tournaments. To deliver this vision council struck a deal with a development company in 1988 that permitted the developer to build a 1200 bed-unit hotel and spa on the Northlands Property sight provided that it includes a world-class tennis facility for the community's use. The existing Whistler Racket Club was erected simply as a temporary structure until the hotel was built.

For various reasons the plans for the elaborate hotel and spa on Northland Blvd. never materialized. That is why 13 acres of prime real estate located at one Whistlers' most central locations currently sits empty and undeveloped—and it is why the "world class" tennis club was never built.

This, however, is about to change! In 2017 the Beedie Group purchased this land from the previous owners who had been sitting on the idle property for over a decade. Instead of a large hotel/spa, Beedie is now moving forward with a plan to build condos on this site. As a result, the property is now going through a rezoning process which has also triggered a discussion and debate about the long-standing debt for the community amenity—namely, the "world-class" tennis club—that is owed to Whistler. (*see the following article*)

<https://www.piquenewsmagazine.com/local-news/northlands-rezoning-represents-missing-piece-of-the-puzzle-3553997>,

The WTA is working hard to convince the local municipality and the community at large that—consistent with the original deal—a "new and improved" tennis facility is what should be built in exchange for the right for Beedie to develop the land. But times have changed over the last ~30 years, and many competing groups are voicing their opinion on what the community now needs (staff housing, childcare, etc.).

Needless to say, if any of them win this debate, we will not only lose the existing club but also our long-standing vision to turn Whistler into a global tennis hub.

This is where the WTA needs your help. In order to convince council that an upgraded year-round tennis club in Whistler is viable we need to demonstrate there is ample support and demand for such a facility (i.e., if we build it, they will come). As a result, we are reaching out to any members of the Lower Mainline tennis community, who might have an interest in seeing our vision come to fruition. If this includes you, then there are two ways that you can help us.

First, you can sign up as a member of the WTA (click here) <http://whistlertennisassociation.ca/membership/>.

There is a token one-time cost of \$5 to do this (we are non-profit; all funds go towards our marketing campaign and advocacy efforts), but the most important thing for us to demonstrate that we have a robust and growing membership base behind our cause (i.e., strength in numbers).

The other way you can help is by participating in one of two short surveys that we have recently published. By collecting hard data and empirical evidence supporting our vision, we hope that our voice will be stronger. Below are the links to the two surveys, one of which is for residents (both full and part-time) and the other is for visitors to Whistler.

\*Survey for Full and Part-Time Whistler Residents\*: Resident Survey

<https://us16.list-manage.com/survey?u=daa289140d9dc554967f6d262&id=c22e31a716&e=614b44f2b4>

\*Survey for Visitors to Whistler\*: Non-Resident Survey

<https://us16.list-manage.com/survey?u=daa289140d9dc554967f6d262&id=e78eee0481&e=614b44f2b4>

Finally, please note that there is a sense of urgency to this issue as the formal public hearings about the rezoning are now underway.

Thank you for your help on this project and please forward this email to anyone else who might be interested in supporting our goal of bringing a “world-class” tennis facility to Whistler.